

Postdeployment Homecoming and Reunion

Celebration Planning

Operation R.E.A.D.Y.

Resources for Educating About Deployment and You

Homecoming and Reunion Celebration Planning

Facilitator's Guidelines

This section provides the facilitator with resources needed to plan and conduct a workshop.

Each workshop unit has **4 sections**:

- Facilitator's Guidelines
- Workshop Overview
- Workshop Plan
- Workshop Resources

Topic: Celebration Planning

Goal: Family Support Groups (FSGs), and those who assist them, will learn a 4-step process for organizing and planning homecoming activities.

Audience: This session is designed for **Family Support Group members**, and **key support personnel**. It should be offered before homecoming.

Time Required: 1 hour

Room Requirements: This workshop requires a room large enough to accommodate the number of participants. It is designed as a group process for roundtable discussions with 8–10 people at each table. The room should be arranged for maximum visibility of the flip charts and overheads.

Facilitator's Preparation:

1. Reserve a location for conducting the workshop that will accommodate the number of participants.
2. Prepare flyers (located in Flyer Master section) and distribute them 1–2 weeks before the workshop.
3. Familiarize yourself with the goals of the workshop.

4. The facilitator's job is to lead the workshop, which includes distributing handouts and organizing flip chart activities. Other tips include:

- ✎ plan an ice breaker
- ✎ encourage participation
- ✎ check for understanding
- ✎ prepare room
- ✎ make workshop personal
- ✎ gather needed material
- ✎ enjoy yourself
- ✎ offer amenities, such as child care, parking, and refreshments

5. Suggested activities are presented in square brackets ([]) in the lesson text.

The lesson text is meant to assist you and is not intended to be read aloud to the participants. The **suggested activities** list the visuals, handouts, or group activities that are used at particular points in the workshop.

6. Prepare overhead transparencies from the Transparency Masters provided.

- #1 Celebration Planning
- #2 Objectives
- #3 Homecoming Activities
- #4 4-Step Process

7. Prepare flip charts with the following title for each table, and distribute before the workshop begins:
Activities

8. Prepare flip chart paper (for facilitator's use) with the following titles:

- Soldiers
- Family Members
- Community

9. Reproduce the necessary numbers of handouts from the Handout Masters—1 set for workshop use, 1 set to take home.

- #1 Activities Planning Guide

10. Assemble all other needed workshop materials and equipment.

Workshop Materials:

- Flip chart paper on 1 easel with colored markers
- Extra markers for flip chart activity at tables
- Masking tape for securing charts
- Pens and pencils for participants' use

Equipment:

- Overhead transparency projector and screen

Homecoming and Reunion Celebration Planning

Workshop Overview (time 1 hour)

Estimated Time	Presentation Section	Visual-V Handout-H
5 minutes	Introduction Objectives	V#1 V#2
10 minutes	Organizing a Homecoming Activity	Flip Chart activity (facilitator) V#3 Flip Chart activity (in groups)
10 minutes	4-Step Process Planning	H#1 V#4 H#1 Step 1
15 minutes	Objectives	H#1 Step 2
5 minutes	Assigning	
5 minutes	Controlling	H#1 Step 3
5 minutes	Evaluating	H#1 Step 4
5 minutes	Conclusion	H#1 (blank copies for participants) H#2

Homecoming and Reunion

Celebration Planning

(time 1 hour)

Introduction

[Visual #1: **Homecoming and Reunion Celebration Planning**]

Welcome to the Homecoming and Reunion workshop for Celebration Planning. Today we will be work at tables in small groups, so please take a seat at a table.

(allow a few moments for groups to form)

This workshop is designed for Family Support Groups (FSGs) and those who assist them. We will be using a group process to learn how to plan successful homecoming celebrations.

Objectives

[Visual #2: **Objectives**]

During our time together, we will:

- Discuss the significance of homecoming activities to soldiers, family members and the community
- Learn how to organize a homecoming activity that encompasses the entire community

Organizing A Homecoming Activity

Today you will use an activity guide that will help you organize a homecoming activity.

Before we begin that project, let's address some important questions.

[Flip Chart Activity (Facilitator)]

Why is it important to soldiers to have homecoming activities?

(record responses on flip chart entitled "Soldiers," and post on wall)

Why is it important for family members to have homecoming activities?

(record responses on flip chart paper entitled "Family Members," and post on wall)

Why is it important for the community to have homecoming activities?

(record responses on flip chart paper entitled “Community,” and post on wall)

It is good for a soldier to be welcomed home and to be home. As you can see, homecoming is important to all three groups. It is significant to recognize the personal sacrifices that the soldiers, the families, and the communities have made during deployment. Recognition can help bring closure to an event.

[Visual #3: **Homecoming Activities**]

The idea behind homecoming activities is to show support and appreciation for soldiers, family members, and all who assisted during deployment. These activities clearly demonstrate to everyone that sacrifice and service to our country is appreciated.

Planning homecoming activities takes time and coordination. This includes not only the military community, but the civilian community as well. We will plan a homecoming activity in this session.

[Flip Chart Activity (in groups)]

To get our creative juices flowing, I would like for you to look at the flip chart paper on each table that has the word “Activities” at the top. Take 5 minutes to brainstorm all the “homecoming activities” you can think of.

(allow 5 minutes)

Please have a volunteer post your flip chart on the wall, and we will compare responses.

Your responses are excellent and, as you can see, many of them are similar. Looking over the charts that your group developed, take a moment to choose an activity for which your group could plan a celebration.

4-Step Process

[Handout #1: **Activities Planning Guide**]

Now that each group has selected a celebration to plan, let me take a few moments to explain the activity guides.

[Visual #4: **4-Step Process**]

The activity guides are divided into **4 steps**:

- ✎ **Planning**
determines the objectives, actions, who will do what, by when, and with what resources.
- ✎ **Assigning**
determines who will do each action—this is also known as delegating.
- ✎ **Controlling**
monitors the progress of each step and makes adjustments.
- ✎ **Evaluating**
assesses how the activity was received. Were the goals met? Did everyone do their job? Are there ways to do it better next time?

Planning

We will start with the first step—planning. This step is easy; you each have a goal to accomplish “X” activity. The important part is to decide what your objectives are.

For example: You are planning a picnic, your objective is:

To feed 50 people hot dogs and hamburgers on September 15, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at a cost of not more than \$2 per person.

Let’s begin our planning with each table group coming up with several objectives. This is the first step. Be sure to read the explanation of a good objective in Step 1, Number 2, of the Activities Planning Guide. Note that it must be action-oriented and measurable.

(allow 10 minutes to complete)

Step 1—Planning

[Handout #1, Step 1]

The next sheet in your activity guide is an objective worksheet. Notice that there are 4 columns:

- ✎ action steps
- ✎ by whom
- ✎ by when
- ✎ resources

Think about our picnic example. Some action steps might be:

- ✎ coordinate with the chain of command
- ✎ secure a picnic location
- ✎ send out notices about the picnic
- ✎ make reservations for those attending and set an RSVP date
- ✎ determine how many hamburger and hot dog buns you will need
- ✎ determine how many pounds of hamburger and the number of hot dogs you will need to serve 50 people

A word of caution here: in your action steps, **do not forget** to coordinate your activities with the proper person and to obtain the proper clearances. If it is a large activity, you may add the objective to coordinate with the commander, the community, or other officials.

For example, if you want to launch balloons, you will not only have to obtain the commander’s permission, but perhaps also that of the FAA and the city, county, and state, as well. This is a very important step that must be **completely** and **thoroughly** fulfilled!

Also, if you are obtaining donations from the community, such as a banner printed by a local printer, you must get approval from the legal office to be sure it is an acceptable contribution.

You must also remember to send the proper thank-you notes. This also could be an objective (obtain local support for the homecoming activities) with its own set of action steps.

A helpful hint is to make sure your action steps are in numbered in the logical order of completion. This will make it easier to set the completion or deadline dates.

[Handout #1: Step 2]

Next, you should decide who will complete each action step—this means writing someone’s name down next to the step. In Step 2 of the Activities Planning Guide, there are several questions about the person you have chosen to complete the activity.

Beside each action step in the third column, you need to put a completion date. Since the picnic is September 15, you need to decide how much time is necessary. For example:

- ☞ Location secured: July 15
- ☞ Flyer mailed: August 15
- ☞ RSVPs due: September 10
- ☞ Buns purchased or ordered by: September 14

Finally, list your resources to make sure you have enough money to complete the project. Don’t forget anything when estimating cost.

You have 15 minutes to concentrate on the action steps for 1 or 2 of the objectives that you identified.

(allow 15 minutes)

You may have only a few objectives, or you may have many. It depends on the magnitude of the activity. The important thing to remember is that for each objective you will have a set of action steps. Thus, you need an action worksheet for each objective.

Assigning

When you are planning your activity and have written down who will do what by when on your objective worksheet, you will have completed the second step—**assigning**. Assigning is sometimes called delegating. Review Step 2 to make sure you’ve covered all the tasks in assigning.

(allow 5 minutes to review)

Controlling

[Handout #1: Step 3]

The third step is **controlling**. Controlling involves someone in the group (Family Support Group leader, project coordinator, etc.) keeping track of who is doing what, if it is being done on time, and assisting with any necessary coordination. Take a moment to select someone from your group to control your homecoming activity and fill in the blank in Step 3.

(allow a few moments for selection)

Evaluating

[Handout #1: Step 4]

The final step is **evaluating**. You must evaluate as each objective is completed, and also at the end of the activity. Unfortunately, few people take the time to evaluate. It is important for Family Support Groups to evaluate. Evaluating can assist you in planning future events and shows that you are well organized.

The evaluating step is not complete until a thorough after-action report is prepared. The after-action report is both a record of the project and a valuable reference for the future. In the after-action report, you review all the evaluation points and make recommendations for planning future activities.

Be sure to include what steps were taken, how long it took, how much money and resources were needed, and what the results were. Take a moment to review Step 4.

(allow a moment to review Step 4)

Conclusion

As you have seen from our activity, planning a homecoming activity is not a job for one person. It should involve as many people as possible so that it will not overburden any one individual, organization, or contributor. It is a team effort that requires planning.

If you plan carefully, any activity you hold will be a success. It will show the returning soldiers that their contributions were appreciated. It will help reunions with families, friends, and communities. Take time to plan and make it a meaningful activity.

Here is a blank copy of the Activities Planning Guide. Keep this guide handy for future reference when planning a homecoming activity.

[Distribute blank copies of Activities Planning Guide]

Homecoming and Reunion

Celebration Planning

Do you know why homecoming celebrations are important to soldiers, family members, and the community?

Would you like to learn a step-by-step process for planning a successful homecoming celebration?

This workshop will provide you with:

- ✦ take-home information
- ✦ checklists
- ✦ practical ideas
- ✦ opportunity to meet people with common interests

Join us at _____

For a workshop on _____

Date _____

For more information contact _____

See you there!

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Objectives

- ✍ Discuss the importance of homecoming activities to soldiers, family members, and the community
- ✍ Learn how to organize a homecoming activity that includes the entire community

Homecoming Activities

4-Step Process

Planning

Assigning

Controlling

Evaluating

Activities Planning Guide

Step 1—Planning involves deciding what is to be done. It is accomplished through setting objectives, listing action steps, deciding who will do what, by when, and what resources will be needed.

1. What is the activity to be accomplished? (The activity to be accomplished is a picnic.)

2. What is the objective of this activity? Use an action verb; be specific; think about time frames. (The objective is to feed 50 people hot dogs and hamburgers at a cost of not more than \$2 per person on September 15 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

Is this a good objective statement? Ask these questions:

- ☐ Is the objective clear?
- ☐ Does it set a time?
- ☐ Does it say what needs to be done?
- ☐ Does it consider available resources?

3. An important part of planning is determining what will be done, by whom, by when, and what resources will be needed. Remember, resources mean time, people, and money. (For example: what—coordinate with the chain of command; by whom—the Family Support Group leader will do it; when—by July 1; resources—it will cost \$35, and will require 10 volunteers.)

Objective Work Sheet

Action Steps	By Whom?	By When?	Resources

Step 2—Assigning is determining who will do each action step. This is sometimes called “delegating,” or, in the military, “tasking.”

Look at the **By Whom?** column on your **Objective Work Sheet**. Ask the following questions:

- ☞ Can this person do the job?
- ☞ Do they need more training?
- ☞ Do they have the skills?
- ☞ Do they want to do the job?
- ☞ Do I have the time to work with them if they do not have all the skills?
- ☞ If I cannot work with them, is there someone else who could?

Remember you do not have time to do it all!

Keep in mind that assigning will work best if it is done in an open, honest way. If this is the first time someone has worked on a project like this one, you will need to go into more detail with them.

If the person has participated in projects like this one before, you could simply discuss what is to be accomplished. You may recall your leadership training in Family Support Group. It will help you in this phase. When you do assign a task to someone, follow these guidelines:

- ☞ What do you expect them to do?

☞ What will the action step(s) look like when it is completed?

☞ How much time will they have to do it? When is the deadline? What dates will you check back with them to monitor progress?

☞ Who are the other people with whom they need to coordinate?

☞ How does this step fit into the entire activity?

☞ What authority will the person have? What decisions can they make? What are the limitations?

☞ What people, resources, equipment, and money will they have to complete the action step(s)?

Step 3—Controlling is tracking or monitoring the work in progress and making adjustments, as needed. Be careful not to overcontrol the work or make more changes than are necessary.

Controlling is accomplished through meetings with the entire activity team and also with individuals on the team. In what ways will you manage your work group in this activity?

Step 4—Evaluating should be done throughout the course of the project as each step is completed, not just at the end. The following questions could be asked any time during the process:

- ☞ Are the action steps on schedule?
- ☞ Does everyone know what is expected of them?
- ☞ Are the action steps being completed on time? If not, why?
- ☞ Did people follow through on their assignments? If not, why?
- ☞ Were there changes from the plan? Why? Were they positive or negative?
- ☞ What would you do in same way next time?
- ☞ What would you do differently?

Remember—Evaluation is not complete until you have prepared a follow-up report. It is both a record of the project and a valuable reference for the future.

Workshop Evaluation*

1. Did you understand the objectives of this workshop? _____Yes _____No
2. Do you think these objectives were met? _____Yes _____No
3. If you answered **No** to either 1 or 2, please explain your answer below:

4. Circle the word which best describes the effectiveness of this workshop:

Inadequate Marginally Effective Effective Very Effective Outstanding
5. Based on your above response, what are your suggestions for improving this workshop?

6. How did you benefit from this workshop?

7. Did this workshop meet the needs of the participants? _____Yes _____No
8. Circle the word which best describes the facilitator's presentation:

Inadequate Marginally Effective Effective Very Effective Outstanding
9. Please share your comments about the facilitator's presentations?

10. If you were the next facilitator to lead this workshop, how would you improve it?

*Use the back of this sheet to continue your responses, if necessary.